

Wrath

by Maelstrom

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Summary: Written in answer to the Genderswap Challenge. What if there was never a Batman, but a Batwoman? Warning: language.

Wrath

This was written in answer to Alara's Genderswap Challenge. In her words (slightly abridged), "We've seen a number of stories where a character gets genderswapped. We've also seen Elseworlds stories where every *other* aspect of a character is changed, from their race to their alignment to their powers. What we haven't seen a lot of, yet I can't help but think there must be *someone* besides me who wants to see it, is the ground-up genderswap of *one* character. The idea is not that a character is somehow transformed into the opposite gender, but that this is an alternate universe where they always *were.*"

So, here's one. :) Uh, warning here about the language. Just a few words, but not very pretty. Please be warned.

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Step aside, Barbara.

I said STEP ASIDE.

You won't stop me. That gun in your hand is an insult. I've gone up against worse weapons before, and you *know* that this armor is bulletproof.

Do you expect me to just stand here while he rampages the street? While he gloats and cackles and triumphs?

Fuck that. Fuck you. He shot my boy, Barbara. He shot my *son.* Dick was in a fucking coma for six days, and you expect me to LIE LOW

until I "get a grip on myself?"

You weren't there, Barbara. You weren't there when the Joker and I were on that rooftop. You didn't see Dick swoop down to help, you didn't see the Joker pull out the gun, you weren't the one who felt like you were running in slow motion while the gunshot deafens you like a thick explosion. You didn't see Dick fall, you didn't see him bleed, you did NOT hear the Joker's laughter ringing in your ears the whole time. So don't you ever, **ever** tell me you know what I'm going through.

I know you love him too, Barbara. But you don't love him enough to kill.

Irony, isn't it? You were the one inspired by my "vigilante-ism." Eager to prove your worth. What was it you called me? Your hero? Not "heroine," but "hero." And here you are now, trying to stop me.

Amused? No, I'm not amused. Not now, nor back then. Back then I was annoyed. When you first appeared in that alley a few years ago while I was taking down those grubby thieves, you proceeding to fight them alongside me. I was startled at first, this girl dressed in a makeshift bat costume, similar to mine except yours wasn't armored and mine was. But you made up for it by fighting with pure energetic zeal.

I remember demanding answers from you afterwards. I remember the sparkle in your eyes indicating of the adrenaline rush still not yet gone. Do you remember what you said? "Let me help. We can get rid of crime in this city." Do you remember what I told you in return?

Yes. There's no way crime could ever be eradicated from Gotham City.

But your smile didn't fade. You kept insisting, kept appearing wherever I did to "help out." The papers thought that you were my daughter. How many times did I have to tersely deny it before they finally believed me? Too many times. Because they don't listen, Barbara. Nobody **ever** listens.

You're just like Dick. He told me that too, just before you arrived. Screaming "you've changed!" several times when I stripped him of his Robin mantle. I could see him fighting against his own emotions, you know, wavering between standing his ground like a man and running away a child. Do you know how much I wanted to reach out and touch him, Barbara? To put my arms around him and soothe him? But I didn't move. I couldn't. And when he saw that finality in my eyes, he knew. He knew I would not change my mind.

You didn't hear him scream at me to leave the room. You weren't there lingering outside the door and listening to his muffled sobs. Your head wasn't in your hands as you sat alone in the Batcave, images dancing on the monitor screens in front of you. You weren't THERE.

How to tell him, Barbara? How to let him know that I love him, I care for him, I fear for him? That he's the son I never had, and I'm so proud of all that he has accomplished? How to tell him that the

decision broke my heart as much -- no, **worse** -- than it did his? But it was necessary, because I don't want him to die. I don't want something like this to ever happen again. I **won't** let it happen again.

You don't hear the voice ringing in my ears now. The Joker's shrill mocking voice, words he cackled when Dick lay on the rooftop bleeding. "You're weak. You're a woman and weak. Leave it to the big guns, Batsy, it's fun time!"

Your fists aren't clenched, Barbara. Your fingernails aren't digging into your palms. No, I don't feel the pain -- I'm used to it. Because it's people like him that create this burning rage within me. I've let him live for too long. I've been **humane** for too long. Yes, that was ice you heard in my voice. I will not let him jeopardize Dick's life, or anyone else's life, any longer. How do you know it won't be you that he guns down next? Or your father? Or anyone else you've ever loved in your life?

I've been piteous, Barbara. I've been too merciful with monsters like these. You expect me to be warm and gentle and treasure life like Mother Nature herself? Mother Nature bears wrath too. She rages with storms and hurricanes and tragedies, the same wrath and fury that I bear now. You know the saying: woe to all who threatens a mother's child. I have no mercy anymore.

You saw that burglar I surprised in the alley earlier tonight? The bullet that I put between his eyebrows, and five more in his chest? I was practicing for the Joker. I intend it to be **his** body slumping to the ground, still grinning as blood wells around him in a thick murky puddle. It will be bloodshed. It will be slaughter.

No, I'm not the same, Barbara. I've changed. You know it, Dick knows it, I know it. And it was a change that was a long time in coming.

Now step aside. It's time for the storm.

=End=

Maelstrom

Dance in Fields of Gold <http://maelie.cjb.net>

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file.